



# POWERED BY WHY

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT





## A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP

# Remembering our 'why' in this momentous year

Friends,

The last year has certainly been one we won't forget! We are immensely proud of the work the team at Palmer Scholars has done to provide uninterrupted services to the nearly 200 Scholars in our programs, despite the many interruptions to the way we normally do business. From taking our trainings online and providing technology and emergency support to Scholars in need, to hosting our first ever virtual mentor match, to conducting our "campus visits" from a distance, we can say with full confidence that our team has navigated this pandemic with aplomb! At the same time, we've continued to make progress on our strategic plan, including the formation of several new key partnerships that have enabled us to expand the services we provide to our Scholars and have contributed to our financial sustainability. As you read through this year's annual report, we hope that you are as impressed as we are with all that has taken place over the last year. Further, we hope it renews your resolve to get involved with our work (we've included several ways for you to do so). We need you, now more than ever, to join us in our work of **Creating Hope and Opportunity through Education!**

With much love and gratitude,



Jonathan Jackson, MBA  
Executive Director

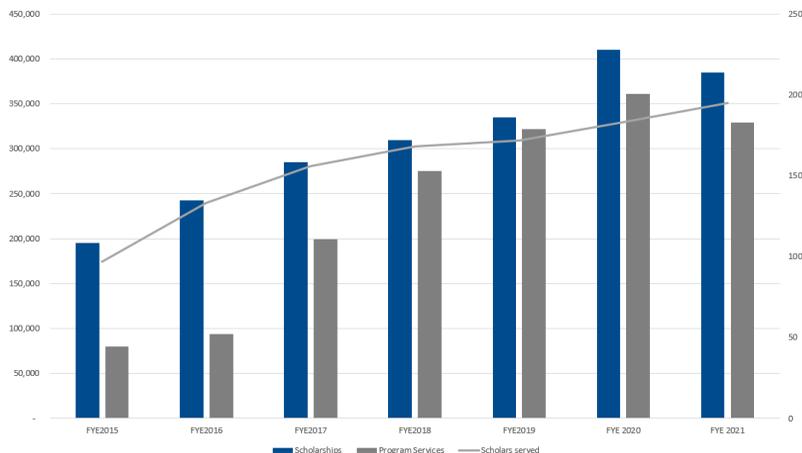


Marissa Rathbone  
Board President

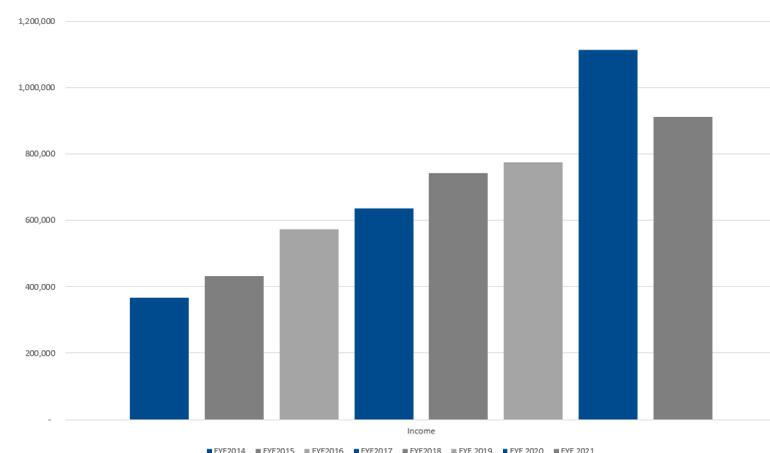
GROWTH THROUGH ADVERSITY

# Our 2019-2020 Achievements

Program Growth



Income Growth



**195**

SCHOLARS SERVED

**\$6,000+**

EMERGENCY COVID-19  
RELIEF PROVIDE

**\$304,648**

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING  
AWARDED

**84%**

POSTSECONDARY  
GRADUATION RATE

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Marissa Rathbone, MAT**

President

**Dwayne Christopher, J.D**

Immediate Past President

**Zach Parsons, CPA**

Treasurer

**Lisa Wojtanowicz**

Secretary

**Steve Schain, Ph.D.**

At-Large

### MEMBERS

Alex Davis

Kimberly Green, RN

Christal Harrison, JD

Amalia Perez

Dan Powell

Gayle Rieber

Kacee Woods

### EMERITUS

Peggy Palmer\*

Willie Stewart

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jonathan Jackson, MBA

\*Deceased

## REPRESENTING THE SCHOLARS WE SERVE

# Introducing Our 3 New Board Members

We are excited to announce that three leaders from our greater Pierce County community have officially joined the Palmer Scholars Board of Directors. Board Members are instrumental in leading our organization's direction and ensuring we can serve our Scholars for many years to come. We value Board Members who are not only experts in their individual fields but are also committed to creating a stronger, more equitable Pierce County.



Alex Davis is a husband, father of three children, pastor, entrepreneur, and passionate leader committed to serving his community. The son of Palmer Scholars co-founder Rev. Al Davis, Alex's goal is to empower people to become the best version of themselves by challenging life and living a winner's lifestyle.

Kacee Woods is a Training & Apprenticeship Analyst at Tacoma Power. In her work she is able to contribute to strengthening the workforce by providing development opportunities that support young adults seeking to expand their technical and professional skills. She is energized by experiencing the joy that comes from connecting people to opportunities, and helping others realize their full potential!



Kimberly Carol Green has a passion for service, which she lives out through her involvement with the PTA at Henry Foss High School, as a mentor for Palmer Scholars, as a member of the Tacoma Chapter of the Links, Inc., and through her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She works as an Epic-Certified Clinical Applications Analyst Consultant with the Oregon Health & Science University, in Portland, Oregon. She is also the mother of a Palmer Scholar!

*To read our new Board Members' full bios, go to [palmerscholars.org/blog](https://palmerscholars.org/blog)*

WHEN THERE'S A WHY, THERE'S A WAY

# What's Kept Our Scholars Going



*Alumna and Board Member Amalia connects a Scholar and her family with the Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center*

The past year has truly put our organization and the services we provide to the test. Our Scholars are underrepresented in all postsecondary pathways. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the effects of the systemic inequality that already posed barriers to our Scholars' success in higher education and beyond. The pandemic has caused our Scholars to lose jobs that helped their families stay afloat. It has disrupted their educational environments. For some, the pandemic has eliminated the only stable housing our Scholars have access to for 10 months of the year. Though our team mobilized emergency support and increased engagement services, we braced ourselves for a drop in enrollment and persistence that many institutions have seen at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. With 97% of our first-year Scholars returning for the second year, we continue to be amazed by the determination and resilience our Scholars show!

Scholars list their families as their number one motivation for persisting through higher education. With 90% of our Scholars being the first in their families to pursue higher education or graduate from high school, Scholars want to set an example for their younger siblings. With this determination and a little support from our staff, Board, and volunteers, our Scholars are destined to reach every goal they set for themselves.

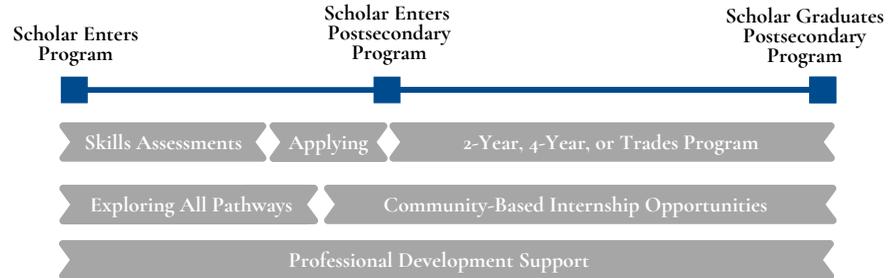
*Thank you to SafeCo Insurance Fund, US Bank, The Russell Family Foundation, Pierce County Connected, KeyBank, Schools Out Washington, and the Discuren Foundation for providing much-needed support to our Scholars during this tumultuous time.*

## SUPPORTING FIRST-GENERATION PROFESSIONALS

# Career-Connected Learning

In 2019, we created a partnership with NEXT MOVE Internships, providing our Scholars with internship opportunities while still in high school. This partnership, in addition to our year-old Pathways program, highlighted an organization-wide need for career-connected learning for our Scholars. In the coming year, we will be forming deeper partnerships with major employers in our community. Our Scholars are not only first-generation postsecondary graduates; many are first-generation professionals who lack access to many things their more affluent peers take for granted such as the privilege to participate in an unpaid internship. Through our career-connected learning program, we will establish a pipeline for our Scholars to take part in meaningful career development opportunities from the time they are in our Postsecondary Readiness Training through postsecondary program completion.

## CONSTRUCTING INDIVIDUALIZED SCHOLAR SUCCESS PIPELINES



## THANK YOU TO OUR CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING PARTNERS!



Pierce County

*Interested in becoming a Career-Connected Learning partner?  
Email Christina at [crupp@palmerscholars.org](mailto:crupp@palmerscholars.org)*

## MENTORING THROUGH THE STORM

# Our Mentoring Program



Photo Courtesy of South Sound Business Magazine

*2020 Scholar Thai works on his college application with mentor Tom Glenn. Thai wants to be a nurse just like Tom.*

Our mentoring program continues to provide the integral added layer of support our Scholars need when pursuing higher education. We have welcomed 30 new mentors to our program, including four who are mentoring our Pathways Scholars. The leaders in our community who apply for our mentoring program are driven by a common "why:" the opportunity to make a difference in a promising young person's life while learning some lessons themselves. In these times especially, our mentors are committed to supporting their Scholar mentees through the challenges that arise in and out of the classroom.

*Interested in becoming a mentor? Email Farrington at [fcador@palmerscholars.org](mailto:fcador@palmerscholars.org).*

"Navigating the education system with very few mentors that I could look up to was one of the greatest challenges for me. This is why I decided to join Palmer Scholars as a mentor--so that one less student has to attend a university without real mentorship."

**Ryan C.  
Palmer Scholars Mentor**

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES



# Palmer Pathways

Despite the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought to our Pathways Scholars, all 5 Scholars persevered through 13 weeks of intensive Postsecondary Readiness Training. Scholars worked with Palmer Scholars staff to identify strengths and interests, and build postsecondary plans. All Scholars are onto the next step of their postsecondary journeys, whether that is through a technical college, apprenticeship, or family-wage employment in the trades. We couldn't have had such a successful cohort without the help of our community partners, including Pierce County, Tacoma Public Utilities, PUSH Leadership Academy, Your Money Matters Mentoring, and various unions, companies, organizations, and community leaders.



*Palmer Scholars staff and community partners celebrated our 5 Pathways Scholars, who completed 100 hours of Postsecondary Readiness Training*

## TOGETHER, WE CAN END GENERATIONAL CYCLES OF POVERTY

Largest Job Sectors and Average Annual Earnings for Young Adults Ages 16-24

Food Services: \$21,263  
Gambling and Recreation: \$23,913  
Clothing and Retail: \$19,322

vs.

Potential Annual Earnings for Young Adults in Apprenticeships

Meter Apprentice: \$68,598-\$81,112  
Wire Apprentice: \$66,934-\$78,644  
Line Apprentice: \$67,558-\$79,996

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# Catching Up with Our Pathways Scholars



### Malcolm F.

Malcolm completed his first quarter at Clover Park Technical College and is currently in his second quarter. Malcolm is pursuing a degree in IT Admin Security. “With this new quarter, where my courses are focused on my degree path,” Malcolm says, “I finally feel like I’m moving closer to my goals – I’m focused.”

### Chandler C.

Chandler is currently in his first quarter at Bates Technical College in the Sheet Metal Technology program. Upon completion in 6 quarters, Chandler will pursue an apprenticeship with the Western Washington Sheet Metal Local 66 JATC (Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee).



### Nate N.

Nate is currently on a short-term contract with ANEW building tiny houses for King County Homeless Services. Nate has been working with ANEW since September 14th. According to Nate, his work has “been a blast. Though the commute (to/from Kent) is tough, the work has been fun and I’ve picked up some additional skills.”

*To read a full progress report about our Pathways Scholars, visit our blog at [palmerscholars.org/blog](http://palmerscholars.org/blog)*

“We have been doing some crazy stuff out in the swampy areas of Tacoma--everything from cutting trees stripping them down and replanting them. In other places, we’re wading in water that’s literally waist to chest high sometimes. I know how to plant trees and grow them. I’ve learned so many new skills--how to tie certain knots, how to paracord...I love it! This is where I was always meant to be.”



### Shiquan C.

Pathways Scholar, Currently in Washington Conservation Corps

POWERED BY WHY

# Traversing the Challenges of 2020



From 215 applications, we happily welcomed 29 Scholars from the Class of 2021 to our program.

Welcome  
Class of 2021!

FEB  
2020



Our inaugural cohort of 5 Pathways Scholars completed 100+ hours of Postsecondary Readiness Training virtually.

Welcome  
Pathways Scholars!

MAR  
2020



With the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, Scholars returned home or found safe lodging near their campuses. Palmer Scholars staff doubled down on engagement efforts.

Quarantine  
Begins

MAR  
2020



Our annual luncheon transitioned to a remote fundraiser and our community stepped up to support our programs in this crucial time. We raised over \$150,000!

Stay In &  
Cheer

APR  
2020

"My time as a Palmer Scholar has been great. When I first applied to the program, I honestly did not know what I was getting into. As time progressed, I started to realize that this what not just a program, it was a family that was dedicated to seeing you succeed and achieve your goals." -Reece (Wilson '18, UW '22)



In light of the racial injustices locally and nationally, we held a virtual forum for Scholars and alumni to reflect, learn about resources, and discuss next steps.

**Heightened Racial Injustices**

**JUN  
2020**



As a part of our Palmer Cares program, we provided the high school class of 2020 with a laptop and school supplies to enter their postsecondary journey on the right foot.

**Setting Up the Class of 2020 for Success**

**AUG  
2020**



As a remote school year begins, our staff are constantly evaluating the needs of our Scholars. We have so far provided over \$6,000 in emergency aid to Scholars and their families.

**Fall 2020 Term Fully-Remote**

**SEPT  
2020**



We are once again supporting current Scholars as they lead our outreach and recruitment efforts, this time virtually. Our application closes on December 8th.

**Virtual Recruitment**

**OCT  
2020**

"While my undergraduate journey presented its fair share of challenges, each time I felt discouraged, I remembered those who came before me who did not have the privilege of doing more, and this keeps me going. My education means everything to me because I know too well what it feels like to have less, and I hope to use the privilege and power education carries to uplift and empower others."

**Megan Quinones**  
**Clover Park '16**  
**Saint Martin's '20**

## ACHIEVING THEIR DREAMS

# 22 Scholars Attain Their Degree!

Dalia Candido	University of Washington
Treasure Chinneth	Pacific Lutheran University
Sandra Estrada	Pacific Lutheran University
Tyron Faaneva	Washington State University
Tania Gonzalez	Western Washington University
Son Huynh	University of Washington
Seonyeong Kim	University of Washington
Jordon Lewis	University of Washington
Victoria Mao	Western Washington University
Jessa Marshall	University of Washington
Kristen Nguyen	University of Washington
Keon Payne	Pacific Lutheran University
Chanelle Peoples	Central Washington University
Megan Quinones	Saint Martin's University
Ricardo Ramirez-Rubio	Central Washington University
Valeria Sanchez-Jimenez	Pomona College
Luis Servin	Washington State University
Victoria Ann Tirado	University of Washington
Justin Tran	University of Washington
Sara Trujillo Casasola	Whitworth University
Julie Waruguru	Northwest University
Khyree Watson	University of Washington



**Tyron Faaneva**  
Foss High School '16  
Washington State University '20

Tyron has always had a passion for helping others and animals. It was this passion that led him to Washington State University to study animal studies on the pre-veterinary medicine track. Tyron recently signed up to be a mentor to a future Palmer Scholar!

## ANSWERING THE CALL

# Alumni Give Back to Palmer Scholars

In Fall 2019, a cohort of six Palmer Scholar alumni formed the Palmer Scholars Alumni Committee. The committee set out to accomplish two goals: to extend Palmer Scholars' mission to support its alumni in their personal and professional development, and to mobilize alumni to advance the work of Palmer Scholars through volunteering and giving. Just weeks before the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, the committee hosted their first event, "Healthy Relationships with Ourselves and Others in 2020," featuring alumna Ireri Kang, LMFT. The workshop gave helpful tips about self-care and provided a space for alumni to network with other young professionals in our community.

The committee also formed a partnership with College Success Foundation, Act Six, and Peace Community Center. Since our organizations share many alumni in common, the partnership opens attendance to alumni programming to any alumni regardless of their organization affiliation. As a result of these increased efforts, alumni giving reached an all-time high and multiple alumni signed up to be mentors to their younger Palmer brothers and sisters.



*Thank you to committee members Jesse Becerra, Austin Colburn, Amalia Perez, Eunissa Satterwhite, Jessica Solis, and Davon White.*



"Once you graduate and start working or start a family, it's hard to keep up with friends. That's what's so great about having these alumni services so that when you fall, you know we'll be here to pick you back up!" -Irer Kang (Lincoln '06, Central Washington University '10)

"It blows my mind to be able to honor the partnership that my father and Merle had! When I think about my father and Merle, I think about sacrifice. They didn't just sacrifice their money and time, they were giving a piece of themselves. Today, the people who are involved continue to give a piece of themselves. You can see lives changing!"

### Alex Davis

Son of co-founders Alfred and Mary Davis  
Pastor, Eastside Assembly of Believers  
Palmer Scholars Board Member

## STRONGER TOGETHER

# Harnessing The Power of Partnership



### THE ALFRED AND MARY DAVIS COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

The family of Palmer Scholars co-founder Rev. Al Davis have created a scholarship partnership to honor Rev. Al and his wife Mary Davis. The first Alfred and Mary Davis Community Scholarship was awarded to Harrison Preparatory graduate and University of Washington freshman, Michelle Rogers. Michelle will be studying accounting, just like our very first Palmer Scholar, Sol DiaEze.

### SUPPORTING PALMER SCHOLARS AT PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

Over our 37 year history, Palmer Scholars has served over 600 promising young adults throughout Pierce County. The majority of our Scholars choose to study in-state, and to study at public institutions. For many years, Pacific Lutheran University has been the top private university chosen by our Scholars. We are excited to announce that starting with the 2021-22 academic year, Palmer Scholars and PLU will partner to provide additional financial assistance as well as intentional on-campus support and leadership development to help our Scholars reach the finish line. We are beyond excited to embark on this new partnership with PLU!



For the 2019-2020 school year, 90% of Scholars took \$5,000 or less in student loans. 76% of all Scholars took \$0 in loans. Finances are our Scholars' number one listed barrier to higher education.

### THE CLEVELAND FAMILY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Bob Cleaveland and Merle Palmer were two peas in a pod. Like Merle, Bob also worked in insurance and was dedicated to serving the youth in his community. At about the same time Merle and Rev. Al started Palmer Scholars, Bob and two friends co-founded the Washington State chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, granting wishes to youth with life-threatening illnesses.

Though this work kept him busy, Bob also served as a founding Board Member at Palmer Scholars and remained active with his wife, Deanna, until his passing in February, 2018. To commemorate his life of service, Deanna has established the Cleaveland Family Memorial Scholarship, supporting Palmer Scholars for many years to come.

### THE HILLTOP EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FUND



The Hilltop Educational Opportunity Fund (HEOF) was established in 2019 as a donor-advised fund through the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation. The mission of the fund is to support educational pathways for the Hilltop and greater Tacoma communities, focused on low-income students of color. When the fund holders learned about the work of Palmer Scholars, they reached out. From these early conversations arose a partnership between HEOF, Palmer Scholars, and Peace Community Center. Through this partnership, Palmer Scholars and Peace Community Center will serve two Scholars each year, providing an even stronger network of support. The first Scholars through this partnership will be chosen in early 2021!

YOU'VE GOT YOUR **WHY** | WE'VE GOT YOUR **HOW**

# Join the Palmer Scholars Family

## MAKE A GIFT AND GET INVOLVED WITH PALMER SCHOLARS



\$50 will ensure a high school Scholar receives integral training and support needed to successfully transition to a postsecondary program during a global pandemic.



\$100 will pay for certification classes for a Pathways Scholar to attain immediate, family-wage employment.



\$500 will supply laptops for two Scholars, helping them stay on track in their classes.



\$1,000 will provide a Scholar with a stipend for living expenses and books, decreasing their need to seek employment that is potentially dangerous to their health.



\$5,000 will fully fund a scholarship, helping to ensure our Scholars don't have to choose between paying tuition or buying food for their family.



### Become a Mentor

to help Scholars like Abdwaan successfully transition into higher education



### Establish a Scholarship

so Scholars like Marisol can graduate without student debt



### Sponsor an Event

so Scholars like Nathan can get emergency support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic



### Host an Internship

so Scholars like Malcolm can develop professional skills before finishing his postsecondary program

## CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

# From Stand Up & Cheer to Stay In & Cheer



### STAND UP & CHEER

Typically an in-person luncheon, Stand Up & Cheer is the only fundraising event we host. This event is integral to supporting our Scholars throughout the school year. Due to COVID-19, we switched to a virtual format for 2020. In order to prioritize the health and safety of our Palmer Scholars family, we will once again be hosting a virtual fundraiser in 2021.



### STAY IN & CHEER

This year's event will be similar to last year's, but on a whole other level! We will once again hold a multi-week campaign, sharing testimonials, success stories, and reflections from Scholars, mentors and more, but this year we will host a live culminating virtual event to allow our supporters to come together and hear important updates on our programs.



## SUPPORT PALMER SCHOLARS THROUGH SPONSORSHIP OR PEER FUNDRAISING

Each year, we celebrate our Scholars' accomplishments at our annual Stand Up & Cheer luncheon, sharing the work we do with our friends throughout our community. With the transition to a virtual platform, we aren't able to meet the many new faces who typically come to our event with our existing base of community supporters. At Palmer Scholars, we value friendraising as much as we value fundraising. Through sponsoring or signing up to lead a peer fundraising campaign, we can continue to serve our Scholars while growing our Palmer Scholars family of supporters!

Want to be a  
Stay In & Cheer Sponsor?



Scan the QR code using your smart phone  
or email [sponsorship@palmerscholars.org](mailto:sponsorship@palmerscholars.org)

Want to be a  
Stay In & Cheer  
Peer Fundraising Captain?



Scan the QR code using your smart phone  
or email [giving@palmerscholars.org](mailto:giving@palmerscholars.org)

# THE \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOLARSHIP

## WE THINK A SCHOLARSHIP IN YOUR NAME HAS A NICE RING TO IT.

### ARE YOU READY TO LIVE YOUR LEGACY?

Now, more than ever, it is important for our youth to have access to higher education. At Palmer Scholars, we provide Postsecondary Readiness Training, a one-to-one community mentor, career-connected learning opportunities, ongoing support services, and scholarships to low-income youth of color throughout Pierce County. Since our inception, we've guided over 600 Scholars through 2-year, 4-year, and trades programs, closing the postsecondary success gap for low-income youth of color and halting generational cycles of poverty.

100% of our Scholars list finances as the main barrier to pursuing higher education. You can help! Establish a named scholarship with Palmer Scholars and know that your investment is backed by a family of staff and Board members who are committed to seeing our Scholars through to graduation and career!

*Interested in establishing a named scholarship? Email [giving@palmerscholars.org](mailto:giving@palmerscholars.org)*



# THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDATION PARTNERS!

Anderson Foundation  
Baker Foundation  
Bamford Foundation  
Dimmer Family Foundation  
Discuren Foundation  
Elliott Family Foundation  
Florence B. Kilworth Charitable Trust  
Foundation for Tacoma Schools  
Forest Foundation  
Gottfried & Mary Fuchs Foundation  
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation  
Harvest Foundation  
Lucky Seven Foundation  
Marco J. Heidner Foundation  
Medina Foundation  
Norcliffe Foundation  
Pierce County Connected  
Rotary Club of Lakewood

Rotary Club of Tacoma #8  
Rotary Club of Tacoma North  
Rotary Club of Tacoma South  
Russell Family Foundation  
Safeco Insurance Fund  
Sequoia Foundation  
Silver Family Foundation  
Stewardship Foundation  
Stockdale Family Foundation  
Sunrise Rotary Club of Tacoma  
Thompson Family Foundation  
Titus-Will Families Foundation  
US Bank  
Voigt Charitable Foundation  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
William Kilworth Foundation  
Woodworth Family Foundation

**“The Russell Family Foundation is proud to support Palmer Scholars and we have long admired the “Whole Scholar” approach that offers wrap around support to students. Palmer Scholars works to ensure scholars don’t just gain access to college, but persist and thrive as they reach toward their individual dreams and aspirations.”**

**Holly Powers  
Senior Program Officer  
The Russell Family Foundation**

STAY IN WITH US!

STAY IN & CHEER 2021

Virtual Luncheon

April 1-20, 2021

# THANKS AGAIN TO OUR 2020 SPONSORS!



## Amara



Every Child. One Community. Cradle to Career.



JAYRAY A PLACE TO THINK  
Branding | Advertising | Strategic Communications



McGRANAHAN architects

